other areas if the States deem it necessary. Presently 148 Family Courts have been set up in various parts of the country.

(b) and (c) Yes Sirs. The National Commission for Women has recommended setting up of Family Court in Every district. All the State Governments/UT Administrations have been requested to take necessary action in this regard in consultation with their respective High Courts.

Vacancies of Judges in High Courts

709. DR. K. MALAISAMY:
SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:
DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is inordinate delay in filling up of the vacancies of Judges in the High Courts;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Government to fill up the vacancies;

(d) whether it is also a fact that there was a huge backlog of cases pending in the High Courts;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) the number of pending cases in High Courts, State-wise; and

(g) the steps taken/being taken by Government to clear the backlog of cases in various High Courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) to (g) The sanctioned strength as also the number of posts lying vacant in various High Courts as on 2.3.2005 is given in the Statement-I (*See* below)

2. Filling up of vacancies in the High Courts is a continuous consultative process among the constitutional authorities. While every efforts is made to fill up the existing vacancies expeditiously, vacancies do keep arising on account of retirements, resignation or elevation of Judges.

2.1 Pursuant to the Supreme Court Judgement of October 6, 1993 read with their Advisory Opinion of October 28, 1998, the process of initiation of proposal for appointment of Judges of a High Court lies with the Chief Justice of that High Court. The Government has, however, been requesting the Chief Justices of the High Courts, Chief Ministers and the Governors of the States, from time to time, to initiate proposals for filling up of the

present and anticipated vacancies during the next six months. In response to these efforts, 78 proposals for appointments have been received from the Chief Justices of High Courts with regard to 138 vacancies obtaining as on 2.3.2005.

3. A Statement showing the pendency position in the High Courts as per the information available is given in the Statement-II (*See* below)

3.1 The pendency of cases in the Courts could be ascribed to various factors, which *inter-alia*, include vacancies of Judges, new legislations, substantial increase in fresh institution of cases, rise in population, heightened awareness of rights on the part of the citizens, granting of adjournments, industrial development in the country, increase in trade and commerce and socio-economic matters, legislative and administrative aspects touching on the ilfe of citizens, lawyers strikes etc.

4. Various steps have been taken by the Government for the speedy disposal of cases which include setting up of fast track courts, amendment to the Civil Procedure Codes, permanent adalats for disputes relating to public utilities, increase in the number of posts of Judges, establishment of special courts/tribunals, improvement in the standard of legal education, adoption of alternative modes of disputes resolution, such as arbitration and conciliation.

Statement-I

Sanctioned strength and number of posts vacant in various High Courts

Sl. No.	Name of the Court	Sanctioned Strength as on 2.3.2005	No. of vacancies	No. of proposals received from the Chief Justice of the High Court with reference to column 4
1	2	3	4	5
Supreme Court		26	2	—
High Courts				
1	Allahabad	95	17	01
2	Andhra Pradesh	39	10	07
3	Bombay	60	04	—

1	2	3	4	5
4	Calcutta	50	15	04
5	Chhattisgarh	06	—	03
6	Delhi	33	04	04
7	Gauhati	19	01	—
8	Gujarat	42	07	08
9	Himachal Pradesh	08	01	01
10	Jammu & Kashmir	14	05	01
11	Jharkhand	12	05	—
12	Karnataka	40	09	04
13	Kerala	29	—	—
14	Madhya Pradesh	36	06	04
15	Madras	42	16	17
16	Orissa	20	06	05
17	Patna	31	08	13
18	Punjab & Haryana	40	11	-
19	Rajasthan	40	12	06
20	Sikkim	03	01	-
21	Uttaranchal	09	-	-
	TOTAL:	668	138	78

Statement-II

Pendency Position in the High Courts as on 1-3-2005

Sl. No.	Name of the High Court	As on	Civil cases	Criminal cases	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Allahabad	31.12.04	544655	175993	720648
2	Andhra Pradesh	31.12.04	164915	17226	182141
3	Bombay	31.12.04	288454	37330	325784
4	Calcutta	30.6.04	206321	39896	246217
5	Delhi	31.12.04	60353	10772	71125
6	Gujarat	31.12.04	113505	25962	139467

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	Gauhati	31.12.04	50442	6939	57381
8	H.P.	31.12.04	17939	5600	23539
9	Jammu & Kashmir	31.12.04	42417	2435	44852
10	Karnataka	31.12.04	118899	10754	129653
11	Kerala	31.12.04	113652	21752	135404
12	Madras	31.12.04	275730	23029	298759
13	M.P.	31.12.04	141785	59133	200918
14	Orissa	31.12.04	91996	14553	106549
15	Patna	31.12.04	63290	21658	84948
16	Punjab & Haryana	31.12.04	218457	46845	265302
17	Rajasthan	30.06.04	135432	40336	175768
18	Sikkim	31.12.04	50	5	55
19	Uttaranchal	31.12.04	29850	6048	35898
20	Chattisgarh	31.12.4	42158	21574	63732
21	Jharkhand	31.12.04	20865	14947	35812
	TOTAL :		2741165	602787	3343952

High Court Branch and Supreme Court Benches

710. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the High Court Branch started recently at Madurai in Tamil Nadu has been working smoothy and effectively after getting over the initial teething trouble;

(b) what more is required to strengthen the structure and operation of such branch;

(c) whether the Judges meant for Madurai High Court Branch are staying at Madurai;

(d) whether there is any move to start Supreme Court Benches outside Delhi; and

(e) if so, the prospective States to have such Benches?